

Operations of a teleconference device TCD, performed when image data and audio data sent from each teleconference device TCD, and the above-described seating-order information sent from the seating-order determination device GJD are received in the teleconference system according to the present embodiment will be described below. The teleconference device TCD1 will be taken as an example among the teleconference devices TCD1 to TCDn and its operations will be described.

When the information transmitting and receiving section TRB1 of the teleconference device TCD1 receives a signal sent through the communication network NT, the information transmitting and receiving section TRB1 separates the image data and the audio data corresponding to the teleconference devices TCD2 to TCDn from the signal; picks up the above-described seating-order information (including the group information); and sends the picked-up seating-order information as well as the separated image data and audio data to the information manipulation and distribution section PB1.

The information manipulation and distribution section PB1 distributes input images and/or sound to the corresponding monitor devices MD according to the seating-order information. The information manipulation and distribution section PB1 may manipulate images and/or sound

to be distributed, so that, for example, a seating-order change is made easy to understand intuitively.

A specific process to be performed in the information manipulation and distribution section PB1 will be described below by taking a case as an example, in which manipulation is applied to images and sound so as to make a seating-order change easy to understand intuitively, and images and sound are sent to the corresponding monitor devices MD according to the seating-order information.

Fig. 30 shows the structure of the information manipulation and distribution section PB1. It includes an input terminal 201 for receiving images and sound received by the information transmitting and receiving section TRB1 shown in Fig. 2; an input terminal 202 for receiving seating-order information received by the information transmitting and receiving section TRB1; a motion determination section 203 for performing motion determination related to the seating-order information; a connection determination section 204 for determining a connection state according to the seating-order information; an image manipulation device 205 and an audio manipulation device 206 for manipulating input images and sound; and an information distribution section 207 for distributing manipulated images and sound to each monitor device MD.

The output terminals T02 to TOn connected to the

information distribution section 207 are those used for sending images and sound to the monitor devices MD2 to MDn as shown in Fig. 2.

The motion determination section 203 determines the directions and amounts of the relative motions of conference participants HM located at remote places against the conference participant HM1 located on site according to the input seating-order information, namely, determines the directions and amounts of motions related to changes in a seating order, and sends the results as motion information to the image manipulation section 205 and to the audio manipulation section 206.

Fig. 31 shows the structure of the image manipulation device 205. The image manipulation device 205 includes image manipulators 250-2, 250-3, ..., and 250-n for manipulating the input images corresponding to conference participants HM.

The images of conference participants HM are sent from an input terminal 251 to the image manipulators 250-2, 250-3, ..., and 250-n, and the motion information is sent from the motion determination section 203 through an input terminal 252 to the image manipulators 250-2, 250-3, ..., and 250-n.

Each of the image manipulators 250-2, 250-3, ..., and 250-n extracts a motion related to the corresponding